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THE CATEGORIES

AN APPENDIX FURTHER

DARWIN AND EMERSON

WITH TWO NOTES—THE EGO, AND
CAUSALITY

BY

JAMES HUTCHISON STIRLING

HON. LL.D. EDIN., HON. LL.D. GLASG.

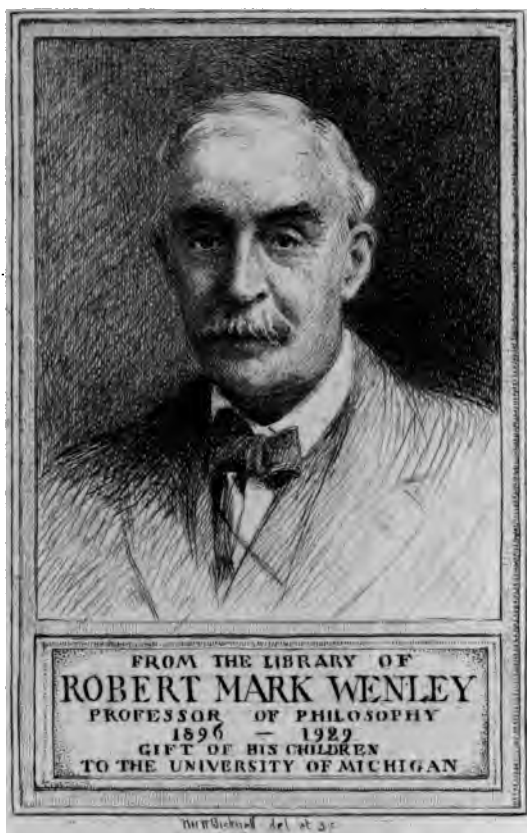
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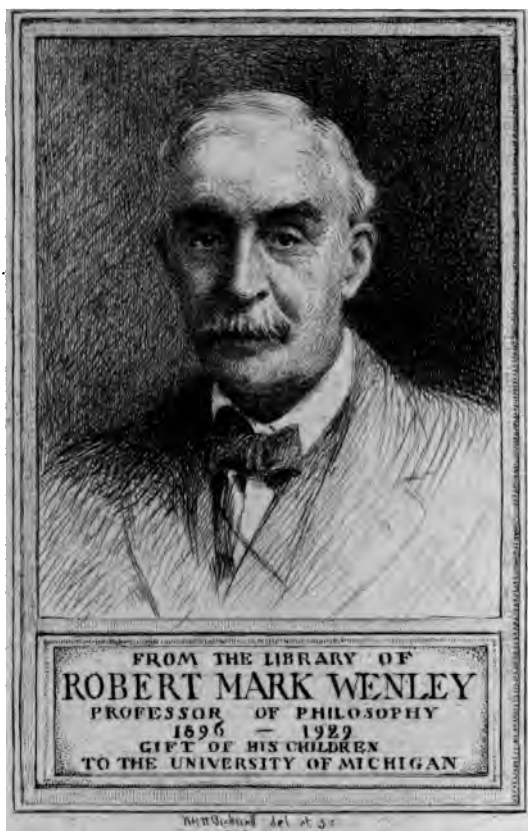
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THE CATEGORIES

AN APPENDIX FURTHER

I.—DARWIN AND EMERSON

"I HAVE found," says Mr Darwin, "the most extraordinary difficulty in making able men understand at what I was driving. . . . They have convinced me that I must be a very bad explainer. . . . Neither of them (Lyell, Hooker) really understands what I mean by natural selection; I am inclined to give up the attempt as hopeless. I am beginning to despair of ever making the majority understand my notions. Both Hooker and Lyell use expressions to which I demur."

Mr Darwin, then, saw a peculiarity in his doctrine that he got nobody to understand; and it was in fact the luck of this misunderstanding that, existent from the first with the "majority," simply *made* him. This peculiarity, namely, *connected* with both, is, in point of fact, rightly neither—neither natural selection nor yet evolution. It turns wholly and solely on Design; and this it was that—by the "majority"—as unseen, was not understood. Mr Darwin, that is, has made it plain to himself that what has been

regarded as Design is no such thing, but only the aimless, purposeless result of mere random, haphazard, outside, literal accident. I mean that he does not only assert and affirm this as the actual fact to his mind, but that, beyond all possibility of doubt, he thinks that he demonstratively proves it, too.

What, to wit, through all the ages has been regarded as the Design of God, the Design of the Universe, Mr Darwin insists—emphatically insists—most emphatically insists—on *replacing*—replacing by a *Proxy*, a Proxy of his own: “No more Design,” he cries, “than in the course which the wind blows!”

Surely this is a most interesting point to see into; as we know, indeed—or shall know, if we will look close enough—this, namely, that evolution, natural selection, the entire doctrine, more than just “connected” with it, wholly, solely, and individually, depends upon it. Surely it is *the* point, crucially and critically *the* point.

This *the* point, then—how does he (Darwin) come to it, and what *is* it?

He turns his eye on “millions of generations,” and “cannot doubt” that “individuals of a species,” even by simple “accident,” will be born in them “with some variation profitable to some part of their economy.” “An organic being like the woodpecker, or the mistletoe, may *thus*”—*thus*, he feels sure¹—“come to be adapted to a score of contingencies.”

¹ See pp. 232-4 of *Darwinianism*.

That—*adaptation of means to ends, contrivance, purpose, intention*—each, under whatever name, obvious, manifest, palpable, glaringly existent—that, all that is what we name Design, and the truth of it is—the *Proxy*, the Darwin's Proxy of accident, mere accident—proxy and nothing else!

At page 112 of the book (the *Categories*) will be found a number of Mr Darwin's illustrations. They are these: seal, bat, flying-fish, bird with longer beak, elephant with inclining tusks, British insect with exotic plant, the bear that feeds itself to a whale in the water. Besides these, there are a few others, but of great interest, as the woodpecker, the tree-frog, the mistletoe, tillandsia, etc. With the bulk of them, indeed, I have, more or less, already dealt, as in the little book itself, or in *Darwinianism*, say.

If, then, I shall now, in representation of the rest, signalise only one illustration, that one shall be, surely in its exceptionally constant repetition, Mr Darwin's own special favourite. And that favourite will, I doubt not, at once suggest itself to every reader as the "bird with a beak $\frac{1}{100}$ th of an inch longer than usual."

The supposition is peculiar, and not quite such as to prove a likely one to everybody, perhaps; but, without wish to make difficulties, we may accept it just as it comes. During "millions of generations,"¹ then, a bird—which, no doubt, has already met, in

¹ *Life*, ii. 124.

these millions, with millions and millions of all sorts of accidents, not one of them all, however, presumably, in what to Mr Darwin, for his special case, is "*the right direction*"—at long and last does meet with an accident in such distinguished direction as is required; an accident, namely, such—and so directed—that it (the bird) can turn it (the accident) to the use and profit of itself.

If, however, we would see precisely here this use and profit, it is to the *Origin* that we must turn. There, as at page 82, we learn Mr Darwin's denial of change in organisms being in any way due to "some innate law"; so at page 72 we hear of the "curved beak" as more advantageous for feeding than the "straight," with "preservation" of the former and "destruction" of the latter. No doubt, then, it is in this way that we are to figure the casual accident of chance (the $\frac{1}{160}$ th of an inch), and also at the same time its adoption into curvature by natural selection. Nor is it any the less expected of us, here as well, to understand that we have now suggested to us an instance of the *Proxy*, the counterfeit, that is to supplant and supersede the Design which even our atheists believed to be present in the universe as a universe, through a power—a wisdom, as it were—innate of its own—the *vis insita naturæ*.

Mr Huxley, on the whole, does not seem aware of Mr Darwin's—to say so—artificial manufacture of Design by adaptation of natural accident and all manner of higglety-pigglety (to use Sir John

Herschel's word) accidents. So much is this the case, that, while he (Mr Huxley) expresses out-and-out surprise as to where Mr Darwin, without conditions, is to find his *variation* at all, he yet actually says of "the selective action of external conditions," "that suggestion is the central idea of the *Origin of Species*, and contains the quintessence of Darwinism." (*That* in the teeth of his own surprise! That of the Darwin who was "inclined to swear at the North Pole, and even to speak disrespectfully of the equator," etc.!) All the same, if Mr Huxley (as he really seems to be) is not aware of Mr Darwin's Accident-Proxy, he certainly finds its result, and very glaringly too, in the action of his own conditions; for he has allowed himself to say as much as this, and plainly to their credit. "The teleology which supposes the eye was made—for enabling the animal to see—has undoubtedly received its death-blow." Whether, then, we choose Mr Darwin's receipt of accident or Mr Huxley's recipe of conditions, it is evident that we have always but one and the same result: not Design, namely, but only a Proxy of it—in that reference Mr Huxley's unreasoned conditions being in point of fact not a bit better than Mr Darwin's unreasonable accidents.

Now, how does Mr Carlyle, say, take all this? "Wonderful to me," he cries, "as indicating the capricious stupidity of mankind—never could waste the least thought upon it!" And surely he who wrote *Sartor Resartus*, and in it a chapter on

“Organic Filaments,” and another as well, following it, on “Natural Supernaturalism,” and in one or other of them such words as these:—

“Nature is one, and a living indivisible whole: mankind, the Image that creates and reflects Nature, without which Nature were not. There is in man a quite indestructible Reverence for whatsoever holds of Heaven. Say not that thou hast now no Symbol of the Godlike. Is not God’s Universe a Symbol of the Godlike; is not Immensity a Temple; is not Man’s History and Men’s History, a perpetual Evangel? Is not the Universe fixed to move by unalterable rules? I, too, must believe that God does indeed never change. We speak of the Volume of Nature: and truly a volume it is, whose Author and Writer is God. Am I to view the Stupendous with stupid indifference, because I have seen it twice, or two hundred or two million times? Our highest Orpheus walked in Judea, eighteen hundred years ago: his sphere-melody still flows, still sounds. The real Being of whatever was, and whatever is, and whatever will be, *is* even now and for ever. Then sawest thou that this fair Universe is in very deed the star-domed City of God; that through every star, through every grass-blade, and most through every Living Soul, the glory of a present God still beams. We are Spirits. Whence? O Heaven, whither? From God and to God.”

What can we expect of a Carlyle, with such things in his mind, but the righteous indignation of a soul outraged, when he is assured that God’s Design, the Design of the Universe, is *not* design, *not* design at all, *not* the least thing in the world of design—that,

on the contrary, only a Proxy, a counterfeit, a sham, is henceforth to be seen as all that there is of Design?

And Emerson was Carlyle's brother; it is to Emerson that Carlyle calls, "My friend! you know not what you have done for me: Lo, out of the West comes a clear utterance, clearly recognisable as a *man's* voice, and I *have* a kinsman and brother: God be thanked for it." It was as he read, that Carlyle spoke; and scarcely can it be said that what he read was without the meed of some melodious tear: for he cries, "I could have *wept* to read that speech; the clear, high melody of it went tingling through my heart." If Carlyle had wept to hear of Emerson as *vowed* to Darwin, then the tear meant was not a tear from the deeps of admiration, love, but no more than the bitter of a tear from the depths of scorn. No falser libel could have speech than to name an Emerson with a Huxley or a Darwin. There are Job, the Psalmist, and the Prophets, and there are Paul and the others, inspired Apostles; but, these apart, never on this earth did spiritual beauty shine in purity from the words of a man as they shone from the words of the holy Emerson; and not one of them but fell overpoweringly—tearfully it may be—on the heart of his fellow with the bliss of Design—the Design of the Universe, the Design of God. Anaximander may be in some sort named loosely Darwinian, because of animals in the moist that, feeding easily, may have preceded man with his more complex necessities, and

men so might be fish-like in birth; but, consistency or continuity of thought otherwise failing, we have but the fancy of the moment. Whereas the *coincidentia oppositorum*, the ἐναντιότης, the ἐναντιοτροπή, the ὁδὸς ἀνωκάτω, the ἀντίξουν, the ἐπέσθαι τῷ ξυνῶ, and much else, indeed the whole ideal thought of Heraclitus, as akin to the general spirit that is in advocacy here with us, is essentially alien to the evolution, whether of the Proxy by chance of Accident or of the Proxy by chance of Weather. And in point of fact Emerson's philosophy can be at all named with that of Heraclitus only in so far as Heraclitus would owe all to himself: it was not πολυμαθία that taught him νοῦν; and so, too, Emerson, eagerly availing himself of English access anywhere, and sitting with ardent curiosity beside science that lectured, was still, for production, secluded to his own self-consciousness. That self-consciousness was alone the sanctuary to which, with veiled head, in awe, he listened for those oracular inspirations that appealed, as though with tears, to the very heart of the grim Carlyle.

Heraclitus being so, I, for my part, relatively not quite a novice, can name no other ancient Greek that for a moment can, even as Anaximander, bear the imputation of the Evolution that is current now—an imputation that is, on the whole, loud, in, say, the Centenary Edition of the works of Emerson. Certainly, in this connection at all, it seems absurd to name Empedocles with the Four Elements and their

dominants, Love and Hate; nor less so to join on with him Xenophanes, who began what is known as "the One-sided All-one doctrine," that is to say, the Philosophy of the Eleatics. Xenophanes simply denied, namely, such a thing as a *Becoming* at all, and asserted only a *Being* (as it were an *Is* that only *is*). Perhaps, indeed, it may come to appear wonderful that evolution, as currently understood, or even more so as left to the one or two express experts, could be extracted or extorted from any one single expression, or all of them together, of Mr Emerson's. And yet, so far as is intelligible to me at least, the only warrant for such operation lies simply in the two words, *Identity* and *Amelioration* (or for Identity say Unity).

There is no doubt that the holy Emerson would identify in God all, everything whatever; and, at the same time, also, just as little doubt is there that he sees all things to rank together, each in its place, just as plants are in their orders, classes, genera, etc., and as Aristotle, followed by Leibnitz and so many others, saw all things in series from least development up to the finally highest, Man. It is all very well to name amelioration as evolution only in its best sense; but to put side by side, and on the same level, and in the same name, as though they were kindred affirmations, and not unconditional contradictions, the profane Proxy of a Darwin with the divine Design of a purely spiritual Emerson, is simply sacrilege. It is certainly enough to point

out this; but it may be well to consider and examine this so-called evolution of Mr Emerson's. That evolutionary ideas had any influence on his mind, how inapplicable and nugatory that is, has been already under comment; and yet it has been insisted on at great length as singularly apposite. As an undoubted step forward, we have mention of Mr Emerson's belief in the *Nebular Hypothesis*. That Mr Emerson should have used the word in any general reference and direction, goes without saying. But did he do so? The twelve-volume Centenary Edition of his works is graced by a perhaps even unusually full and complete index; but "Nebular Hypothesis" does not appear in it; while I, who have read every page of the whole twelve volumes themselves cannot remember to have ever encountered it myself. A good deal of weight is placed on Mr Emerson's visit to the *Jardin des Plantes*, as well as on a phrase, "arrested and progressive development," ascribed to John Hunter. Neither visit nor phrase yields more than the series of living things, from lowest to highest, that, in all time, I suppose, as said, from Aristotle till now, has been a general reference. From page xxix., vol. i., and from page 360, vol. viii., there seems considerable doubt as to the phrase being Hunter's at all; as also in regard to the mention of Darwin on the part of Emerson, in page 7, vol. viii. The visit has its interest, and the phrase itself is rightly descriptive enough, belong to whom it may; but in neither is there any proof

of Mr Emerson's evolution. As Aristotle, with wonderful notices all about, speaks of Nature proceeding from the inanimate, through plant to animal and man, so does the naturalist now; and there is no debate in that connection. In fact there is, in Aristotle's theorising then, just such thought as there is, *pace* evolution, in anyone's theorising now.

That reminds that Mr Emerson, in these relative divine suggestions as voiced by himself, or as voiced of him by Carlyle, has a remark that, by very name, tells on the naturalist here as thus:—

“Nor (Wks. I. 68) has science sufficient humanity, so long as the naturalist overlooks that wonderful congruity which subsists between man and the world; of which he is lord, not because he is the most subtile inhabitant, but because he is its head and heart, and finds something of himself in every great and small thing, in every mountain stratum, in every new law of colour, fact of astronomy, or atmospheric influence which observation or analysis lays open.”

So far as this passage may prove in any way light-giving, it may be general evidence relatively not out of place to add some few passages in a like direction. I have, as to that indeed, marked scores and scores of them throughout the whole twelve volumes, but to quote them all would be tantamount to writing down here, literally, or almost literally, every one of Mr Emerson's very best essays. But what follows the last quotation runs thus:—

"A perception of this mystery inspires the muse of George Herbert, the beautiful psalmist of the seventeenth century."

Then in illustration of "this mystery" which is the mentioned "congruity" of absolute Design, we have a pageful of quotations from the said sweet psalmist:—

"Head with foot hath private amity,
And both with moons and tides."

That, if with any suggestion of evolution, goes certainly something a little further than the proxy of either accident or stress; for it means simply the identity of God in His own universe, the "congruity" that makes the universe one, *a* unity.

"Herbs gladly cure our flesh, because that they
Find their acquaintance there."

"For us the winds do blow,
The earth doth rest, heaven move, and fountains flow;
Nothing we see but means our good
As our delight, or as our treasure."

"The stars have us to bed:
Night draws the curtain; which the sun withdraws.
Music and light attend our head."

"All things unto our flesh are kind,
In their descent and being; to our mind
In their ascent and cause.
More servants wait on man than he'll take notice of . . .
Oh mighty love! Man is one world, and hath
Another to attend him."

Emerson notes that, in regard to such truths as these, there is to "science" only a "half-sight"; and

so he quotes, nominally from Plato, "that poetry comes nearer to vital truth than history." It is in the reference to the said congruity that he speaks of himself as one to whom the woods minister suggestion "of an occult relation between man and the vegetable": "they nod to me, and I to them," he cries—"I am not alone and unacknowledged."

"The visible heavens and earth sympathise with Jesus—the intellect searches out the absolute order of things as they stand in the mind of God." "For although the works of Nature are innumerable and all different, the result or expression of them all is similar and single. Nature is a sea of forms radically alike and even unique. A leaf, a sunbeam, a landscape, the ocean, make an analogous impression. What is common to them all—that perfectness and harmony—is beauty."

"But beauty in Nature is not ultimate. It is the herald of inward and eternal beauty—not as yet the last or highest expression of the final cause of Nature."

Is there, or at all can there be, a final cause to the Proxyists?

"The relation between the mind and matter stands in the will of God—day and night, river and storm, beast and bird, acid and alkali, pre-exist in necessary ideas as in the mind of God, and are what they are by virtue of preceding affections in the world of spirit."

When did a Proxyist see anything originate in a world of spirit—beast or bird, acid or alkali?

"Particular natural facts are symbols of particular spiritual facts. The use of natural history is to give us aid in supernatural history. Nature is the symbol of spirit. Spirit is the Creator. Spirit hath life in itself, and man in all ages and countries embodies it in his language as the FATHER. All the facts in natural history taken by themselves, have no value. The whole of Nature is a metaphor of the human mind. What noble emotions dilate the mortal as he enters into the councils of the Creation." (Mr Darwin, doubtless, and Mr Huxley too, looked on the Creation *so!* valuing even that natural history of theirs only so far as it is supernatural!)

"The steady and prodigal provision for the support and delight of man on this green ball' (as the Proxyists believe!)—the unity of Nature—the unity in variety—which meets us everywhere. All the endless variety of things make an identical impression—each particle is a microcosm—is related to the whole, and partakes of the perfection of the whole. The noblest ministry of Nature is to stand as the apparition of God. Man has access to the entire mind of the Creator."

Is not the single intention of the Evolutionist this:—to supersede the Creator—a Creator at all, instead of creation, to present us with a proxy?

"A man cannot be a Naturalist until he satisfies all the demands of the spirit. There are patient naturalists, but they freeze their subject under the wintry light of the understanding."

In the contrast of the Proxy of design, as against Design as Design, the Design of the Universe, which is alone Emerson's design, lies, I hold,

the utter contradiction of the holy Emerson, of the Emerson of the Oversoul—the soul that is the single idea, the single vitality, the one and single soul of Emerson. There are, however, less than half a dozen quotations that concern what is assumed to be Emerson's positively literal and undeniable pronouncements for the express doctrine of Evolution as evolution. They are those that we see again and again about the worm, the caterpillar, scorpion, grass, etc.

"Striving to be man, the worm mounts through all the spires of form. We feel that there is an occult relation between the very worm, the crawling scorpion, and man. He says to the caterpillar, How dost thou, brother? Please God, you shall yet be a philosopher.

"The poor grass will plot and plan
What it will do when it is man."

All that now is but Emerson's own—quaint Emersonian speech that has under it only Emerson's own proper and peculiar philosophy — universal unity of all things under God; but as Leibnitz has it, and long before Leibnitz, Aristotle, in their reasonable rise from minerals, through the animals to man: "Identity unites all things, and explains one by another." No doubt Emerson believed in "the sure advance of life through the ages"; but he had no debt to Darwin in that regard, nor does he say he had. In point of fact, there is no such rise in Darwin. As Darwin himself tells us, and as we might very plainly see for ourselves in his

own proper and peculiar *Creator*, ACCIDENT, rise at all is not *necessary*; original individual or original species may still exist! The change in the Proxy, with whatever guise of design in it, need not be improvement—let it be ever so true and sure and certain all the same, that, of course, and just as a matter of course, *only the fittest persist*.

There is in vol. i., and it is repeated in vol. ix. (Em., W. W.), this quotation from Plotinus: "We might say that all beings, not only rational ones, but even irrational ones, the plants, and even the soil that bears them, aspire to attain conscious knowledge." Shall we say, then, on the strength of as much as this, that Plotinus was an evolutionist? If Emerson is an evolutionist in his day because of what he then said, is there not the same reason for predicating evolutionism of the Greek long centuries ago? The anachronism implied here is not one whit more absurd than the assumption that Emerson suggested evolutionism as early as the date of his very first work—*Nature*, namely, thereby anticipating, by a generation say, even the "Origin" itself, and so drawing an effacing sponge, as it were, over the whole business!

Of pertinent quotations under Emerson's own hand, there are before me, still temptingly, many others. If I allow myself indulgently to make use of yet a few more, it will be only as aware that a final reading will offer me opportunity of possible abridgment.

"Physical appearances only become of interest as media of teaching certain spiritual truths. . . . We should keep our minds in a constant state of receptivity for the divine thought or idea which underlies sensuous appearance" (Words once again hardly natural to the mere physical thinking in a Proxy). "The fact narrated must correspond to something in me to be credible or intelligible" (*e.g.*, that the idea that the eye was made to see by, has got its death-blow — 'Vernunft, welche in Anderem zu sich selbst zu kommen sich bemüht'). "Nature is a movable cloud, which is always, and never, the same cloud (That is Heraclitus, if you will; but it is to neither the one nor the other evolution). "The mind is one, and nature is its correlative" (Through the Proxy!) "Always the inmost becomes the outmost" (The Proxy says, *v. v.*). "The ultimate fact, resolution of all into the ever-blessed One. O my brothers, God exists! There is a soul at the centre of Nature" (Mr Darwin sees that soul to be the possibility of accident). "Always the soul's scale is one; the scale of the senses and the understanding is another. If we will see how the thing stands in God. . . . For the Maker of all stands behind us and casts His dread omniscience over all. Ineffable is the union of man and God in every act of the soul. All nature is the rapid efflux of goodness executing and organising itself. The noblest ministry of Nature is to stand as an apparition of God. There is no chance and no anarchy in the universe. All is system and gradation" (And so where is that accident which Proxy bows to as, say, awed Creator of the most delicately feelingful organising relations of all that has life and feeling, virtue, function?).

"I read" (says Carlyle once) "with a satisfaction

given me by the books of no other living mortal. Such lightning gleams of meaning as are to be found here—what a *Fiat Lux* into the deeps of a philosophy which hardly three men living have yet dreamt of.”—So Emerson:—

“The perfected man must help on the ascending Creation by the divinity which is in him.—The soul which animates nature. All rests at last on the simplicity of Nature—not any swell, any brag, any strain or shock, but a firm common sense—a true proportion between her means and her performance. *Semper sibi similis*. You shall not catch her in any anomalies, nor swaggering into any monsters—ever the strictest regard to rule, and an absence of all surprises. No; Nature encourages no looseness, pardons no errors. The like strictness is in her dealings with us. She is always serious—does not jest with us. Where we have begun in folly, we are brought quickly to plain dealing. Life could not be carried on except by fidelity and good earnest” (Yet to Mr Darwin accident is all, and to Mr Huxley, that an eye was made to see by, has got its death-blow). “Beauty, in its largest and profoundest sense, is one expression for the universe, but not as yet the last or highest expression for the final cause” (Would that a final cause did exist for men to whom Design is only the Proxy of an accident!)

But, really, to quote Emerson in this one reference were a task endless: the possibility of a further and a further only grows upon us. One might almost point to what has been said of Emerson by Carlyle as alone and of itself sufficient in proof of a radical incompatibility between such a philosophy as that of Emerson and the action of Evolution, whether as only

nominally apprehended by the public, or, again, as simply put (figured and understood) by either of the two generally accredited evolutionists; while, in Carlyle's regard, the single quotation above seems by itself relatively ample, at the same time that in the "Notes" to this, the Centenary Edition of Emerson's works, there will be found other such expressions of true Thomas's quite as strong, and almost *passim*. But, whether for Design in the general or for Evolution itself in the particular, the evidence of Emerson himself is without a call for addition: Emerson is the precise, express, peremptory contradicter of any and every evolutionary coryphæus whatever. For why! The business of his philosophy—the business of him, is this: Den grossen Gedanken der Schöpfung noch einmal zu denken (once again to think the great thought of the creation). Ha! that great thought doubtless, *he* thought, who saw the bear, out of himself, create the whale, or *he*, that other, who knew *that an eye, etc.!*

Of evolution *asserted*, not unemphatically either, as special to Emerson, we have already said something. In pages xxvi.-xxx. of vol. i., however, the point is discussed formally at full length, and it will be just, perhaps also *safe*, to look again considerably at the whole subject.

The Centenary Edition delivers what it has to say on Emerson and evolution in eight points of a formal argument. I find, however, that all the points that

may have any, or appear to have any real significance, have, in the foregoing, been sufficiently met. Nos. 1 and 2, for example, Emerson's "mind and hopeful temperament," his looking on "beneficent law as universal, working alike on matter or spirit," have been used by me in the direction against evolution; and, just so, "spirit" itself has been shown, always and everywhere, as to Emerson, the single substantial interest. Material things, he has said again and again, have value and meaning so far as they have spiritual law under them—so far, in short, as all that is material is but symbolical of spirit. As for No. 3, that the "nebular hypothesis early delighted him." Of course there is not the slightest wish, idea, attempt, to impugn or oppugn any special knowledge of the fact personally as a fact on the part of any one, particularly of any one who had the privilege of household familiarity. But still, even in that reference, this is strange that, though the phrase, "nebular hypothesis," is quite a usual one in philosophical literature, if only as a matter of mere phrase in any view, I do not recollect to have ever seen it, even so used, by Emerson; at the same time, further, that, as has been said already, it is not, in the pretty full index, to be found at all.

Then, what concerns the ancient philosophers, No. 4, has been by me,—who have all, not only the great German commentators and historians, Zeller, Schwegler, Rixner, Ueberweg, Erdmann, Biese, Trendelenburg, Bonitz, *al.*, but also the *Fragments* of

the said ancient philosophers themselves, as gathered by Ritter and Preller, and still better, perhaps, by Mullach,—already authoritatively denied.

No. 5 mentions Leibnitz, Coleridge, Cuvier, Buffon, of whom not one supports Evolution: 6, concerns the *Jardin des Plantes*, and has been already spoken to; 7, Lyell and Lamarck, the one is no evolutionist, and the other is not under discussion here, at the same time that he is dismissed by Darwin himself; while what as last concerns John Hunter has been also already met.

The “*scale of being* from minerals through plants to animals and man,” mentioned in connection with Leibnitz, we have already seen as due in the first place to Aristotle, and as asserted, moreover, by us to be what is alone true in the whole discussion, but not as making for evolution, and not as even dreamt of by either Aristotle or Leibnitz in any such relation. There are in the index several references under the word “Evolution”; but there is not a single one of them that testifies to more than this advancing scale of being, the melioration or amelioration of Emerson meaning also always the same thing.

“Nature from first to last is in incessant advance from less to more, from rude to finer organisation. How far off yet is the trilobite? how far off the quadruped? how inconceivably remote is man? All duly arrive.—

A subtle chain of countless rings .
The next unto the farthest brings,

—Indemnifying the student of man for the defects of individuals by tracing growth and ascent in races. Nature has a higher end in the production of individuals than security, namely, *ascension*, or the passage of the soul into higher forms."

By that passage of the soul into higher forms, Emerson certainly does not mean to see form, or forms, each passing or changing into its own self by dint of some mere casual accident of its own self. It is not so that Emerson ever saw a soul show its emergence into existence. Emerson, in so speaking, has never singly individuals in his eye; no! but always races—races with a new soul each, passed into it by the will of God.

When (xii. 22) Emerson says of the musk-rat: "There is a perfect correspondence; or 'tis only man modified to live in a mudbank. A fish, in like manner, is man furnished to live in the sea; a thrush, to fly in the air; and a mollusc is a cheap edition, with a suppression of the costlier illustrations, designed for dingy circulation, for shelving in an oysterbank, or among the seaweed" — he (Emerson) is not to be supposed to use "modified" in the Darwinian sense, as though in reference to evolution: it is God who, in creating, has directly, or, through the granted *vis insita naturæ*, indirectly, designed, modified, furnished, edited, etc., etc., musk-rat, fish, thrush, mollusc, and each independently in its own mudbank, sea, air, oysterbank, or seaweed, etc., etc. Emerson never for a moment saw the

little bit of protoplasm, the amœba say, that, after all manner of mischanced accidents did, in the million-yearred, long series at last chance on such first accident "in the right direction," and such similar second, third, fourth, fifth—or hundred-millionth accident—each presumably with its own long unchanceful interval—to the production eventually of such completed, designful, full organisations of plant, animal, and man as surround us now. And some of these last words may profitably suggest to us a picture of the whole adventurous, unsecured, imagination which, in proposal, we name casual, fortuitous, outside *Proxy*.

By the extracts made, surely this is clear. The spiritual-mindedness of Emerson, by no expedient of evolution or other, is to be confounded with the material-mindedness of a Huxley or a Darwin. Literally, just literally indeed—the one is as high above the other as heaven is above the earth. Religion is as vitality to Emerson, while to the Proxyists it is as nought—nothing, or something even worse, error, delusion, falsehood. The list of references under Religion in the said index to Emerson's works is a long one, and it is richly indicative. "Creation," "Creator," "Deity," "Divinity," have all matter to the point; while under "God" the references are a column. Emerson, educated as a Unitarian, preached from a Unitarian pulpit; but he left it, and what this Centenary Edition, in note or text, gives him to say of the

creed of the sect is such a phrase as "pale negations," "corpse-cold." "The conversation soaring to principles, Unitarianism is boyish . . . Unitarianism rushes to pure Theism." This he said, and, not rushing, the mood on him grew—this, while life proceeds with him, at the same time that Christ and Christianity are what he appears most minded devoutly and piously to speak of. Surely, indeed, it belonged to the very divinity of that oracularly interpretative self-consciousness of Emerson's (which was to him philosophy, science) to see into the Divinity of Christianity, even in the humanity that is the heart of it. Philosophy has still infinity in view when it says man is God. Man made in the image of God is still but in a material body, material in time, material in space. Material so, he is but a fallible creature, born, as it is said, in sin. He is unprepared so to enter into the spiritual community of the second life. To that he needs Christ—Christ and Christianity.

By the extracts made, indeed, surely it is plain that evolution as evolution—the evolution of its experts, or the sort of mere nominal evolution, neither understood nor sought to be understood by the ordinary intelligence in its vague vacuousness of sequacious assumption and assurance—surely it is plain that evolution, the usual modern doctrine, never was, and never could have been, a doctrine also of Emerson, any more than of Carlyle, who, just generally looking at it in its relations to Nature

and its consequences there, contemptuously indignant, could only exclaim of it, "Wonderful to me, as indicating the capricious stupidity of mankind—never could waste the least thought upon it."

And really *can* honestly any man, knowing about no tribe or nation ever yet met with destitute of belief in God and immortality—knowing too, perhaps, all that about Hume, Napoleon, and, even in the very midst of his physics, Kant—Hume, Napoleon, Kant (see my "Gifford Lectures" and *Darwinianism*)—each with the stars above him—honestly, I say, *can* any man really look—*really look* at the matter and not exclaim with Carlyle, "Never could waste the least thought upon it!"

Suppose we just look again at the steps of it:—

Individuals of a species will, in millions of generations, be born with some certain (possibly only slight) *variation*.

(The very first step has already to the fore pre-existent organisation, at once in *species*, as at once in *individuals*—an absolute premiss, unexplained, inexplicable!)

Variation is a matter of accident, mere chance.

There is no such thing as what is called a *vis insita*, an innate, inherent principle, tendency, aboriginal power of improvement, adaptation: only diversified variability is enough.

Any variation is, in the first instance, no more than an accident—a simple appearance of chance.

Time itself as time is never to be supposed to

initiate change, foster growth, development, maturation, maturity.

Neither is there any such power, influence, in conditions: a little more heat or cold, damp or dry, is indifferent; absurd to suppose that climate should make a pediculus formed to climb hairs, or a woodpecker trees.

Variation, so far as result (progeny) is concerned, may be null, of no effect.

Or it may be actually, and, indeed, actively negative; it may bring disadvantage only, and prove to the organism itself finally destructive. But still, if in *the right direction*, it may prove affirmative—bring a profit, an advantage. On the last supposition rests the whole of natural selection, the whole of evolution. But the feature, the most specially, and, so to speak, even *betrayingly* characteristic of the theory is still this: Evolution, Natural Selection, does not necessarily imply or involve improvement, ascent, rise into the visibly actual fact of adapted form, contrivance: the original, or aboriginal, primordial, prototypal organism, the at least possible recipient subject of a first variation, may, even at this moment, with never a change, first, last, or intermediate, actually exist.

Now these are pretty well the entire round of particulars that constitute—and they are all to be found elsewhere with me under the hand of Mr Darwin himself—in every feature the complete

theory of the Darwinian *Evolution*, the Darwinian *Selection*.

And surely the design which is to be suggested to us as the outcome of the whole, is most righteously to be called Proxy. So confident and proud, indeed, is Mr Darwin of this his proxy, as the one result all along aimed at, that he actually has the expression, "my deity, 'Natural Selection.'" Design as design, however, the Design of the Deity whom man names God, is not a proxy. That is the design that to all philosophers *is* design. The Germans, Kant and the rest, can name only one design, God's design, as it is in Nature; and since the Greeks, they are held to be the greatest, or even, as some say, the only philosophers. And the Greeks themselves, how are they? Will Mr Darwin, if they are not with him, slaughter Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle? or will they?—Ah!

Design fed, design animated, the teaching of all these great Greeks; design intrinsic, design with the stamp of truth and reality as of the hall, to say so, on it; design genuine, that alone is design—the design of the universe, the design of God.

The design of Mr Darwin is, as the metal of Mr Pinchbeck, brummagem.

Even his well-meant illustrations that satisfy himself, of variations by accident that are proposed as conceivably tropically *selected*, will, properly looked at, hardly satisfy, perhaps, others. They (seen already) are these:—A bird born with a beak $\frac{1}{100}$ th

of an inch longer than usual; seals beginning to feed on the shore; bats taking to feed on the ground, or anywhere else except in the air; a British insect feeding on an exotic plant; variation of direction in the tusks of an elephant; a black bear swimming with widely open mouth, catching insects in the water.

Mr Darwin candidly admits that all these examples or illustrations are no more than merely supposititious. He frankly tells us himself that he knows of no case whatever of a seal feeding on the shore; and we easily see that as is the seal to his knowledge, so also is it with bat, insect, and exotic plant, elephant and tusks: even the black bear he did not see himself; and if Hearne the hunter saw it, it was not Hearne the hunter saw the whale come out of it, but only, to the amusement of Lyell (see elsewhere the story), Mr Darwin himself, multiparous in dream. It occurs to me here to ask, Did Mr Darwin ever wonder how swordfish and elephant, say, managed to live while the sword for the one and the trunk for the other were not grown, but only growing? Then, again, for conditions, Mr Darwin, if he did not know that Mr Huxley asked with surprise, how, without conditions, "variation should occur at all" still knew that he (Huxley), making conditions the very lever of variation, and blind to Darwin's very secrét, the Selection of Accident (which, as what "he was driving at," he could get nobody to see, not even Lyell and Hooker),

essentially disagreed with him, and so, thus, essentially also, did not understand him—why, I say, did Mr Darwin, though not quite without a sniff at Huxley (see *Darwinianism*, page 163), fail to inflict on Huxley the “demur” he inflicted on Lyell and Hooker?

What Mr Darwin’s theory of evolution is—what his central idea, the selection, the natural selection of accidents is—in a word, what the entire machinery of his action is, must, from all these clauses, not one of which is not specifically, peculiarly, substantially Mr Darwin’s own—stand out, now, there, nakedly open, without a rag to drape it.

Theory! Can that be even named theory, which from the very instant of start, as *felo de se*, suicidal, self-destructive, is absolutely nugatory. His origin, as *origin*, is accident, and on what is that accident to fall? Mr Darwin, arming himself with the possibilities of “millions of generations,” “cannot doubt”—allows himself to take it for granted—that it will fall, indefinitely, on “*individuals of a species*”! Actually he cannot start his first accident—that accident of accidents—without having, quite loosely before him, any number of individuals and—already, actually, any number of *species*! He cannot move from the spot without his accident. And his accident itself—why, it cannot fall on nothing! Nay, it cannot fall on even *something*! To be productive of a result, as, of course, it is really intended to be, it cannot fall on iron or a stone, say. Nay, there is

only one something on which, productively as intended, it *can* fall. It must fall on—an *organism*—already to the fore! ·

But never mind the start: take Mr Darwin's very end. Intermediately, to say so, Charles, like his grandfather, Erasmus, with his filaments, thought first of one parent for each kingdom. He comes by and by to four or five primordial forms; but these contract in the end (as the filaments did) into some single prototype. He had spoken at first of assuming *creation* for "one or a few forms." It is not long, however, before creation is utterly discarded, and a simple *appearance*, "by some wholly unknown process," is adopted instead. Thus, he says once, "I think that all vertebrata have descended from one parent, but how that parent *appeared* we know not."

Now is not that very simple, or even silly, on the part of Mr Darwin? They descended from a parent, a first organism that just appeared. But an organism *is* an organism, and if it just then and there appeared *and was*, call for intromission of Nature to originate there is none: natural selection, evolution, the whole theory, so far as it was to substitute any plain, ordinary, intelligible, expedient from without for any principle from within, any *vis innata nature*, not even to name creation, design, God, is, at a word, summarily dismissed. Why, with one primordial prototype any chance even of a Struggle for Existence disappears, not again to

reappear, I fear me much, even with entrance of these few, four or five, primordial forms, let them be created, or let them only appear. Whatever is created or just appears is precisely alike in this respect, that it is only a middle; "it is an *ax* in either case, and an *x* in neither, for it is simply to be taken as it *is* in the one or the other. If it is created, it is just *positively* so; and if it appears, what it *is* it just *positively* again *is*. Mr Darwin's *first* is from the first an unexplained first; and the premiss being so, no consequence is otherwise. Mr Darwin's own expedient relieves him of nothing. His position is infected and utterly ineffectual, What is created, he must accept; and what appears, he must simply accept also: as either—for all its consequences it is equally responsible. And as either it is unprecedented by what is absolutely and alone necessary, the all-productive and creative—accident!

Mr Darwin admits to Haeckel, "if it could be proved true, this would be most important to us," and the "this" is a proteine compound, spontaneously formed, just chemically, in some warm little pond, with all sorts of ammonia and phosphoric salts: "this," as a discovery of transcendent importance, he tells Wallace, he would like to live to see proved true. This remarkable "this," however, has never been proved true (see Pasteur); and now, alas! it never can be proved true, "for at the present day such matter, formed with all these

living animals, and not as it was at first with none, would be instantly devoured and absorbed!"¹

But accident, accident, accident—who can philosophise, rationalise accidents? Not that philosophy, reason, is exactly the want of Mr Darwin. No, his accident is to be, inexplicably somehow, just a talisman, potent as any drum, or ring, or rod, or lamp in an Arabian story. A hundredth of an inch, say, in the beak of a bird, purely an accident, and unintelligibly so, *might* prove, we cannot yet say *has* proved, the Open Sesame to a new species!

Now that is but a beginning. But so charming did it prove as a hint, a hint to account naturally, physically, for the appearance of design in things, that presently it grew and grew prolifically to fill the very mind of Mr Darwin so that he applied it as a key at last, that at least to him was a name to conjure out of sight all mystery. If flower and tree and beast and man were accidents (just as one's eye was to Huxley), so was every thing in Nature accident, mountain and sea and plain, and smoking volcano. The clump of matter was an accident, and life itself. The whole world was an accident. Space and time were accidents. Existence at all! why existence—existence was just an accident! Mr Darwin tells Asa Gray, he had "no intention to write atheistically; but he cannot see, as others do, evidence of design on all sides: he is inclined to look on everything, with its details,

¹ It is Mr Darwin who speaks.

whether good or bad, left to the working out of what we may call chance!"

So, then, with natural selection—with evolution—that is what it all comes to. Nor can, even with protoplasm, Mr Huxley help. Let us just look back and ask ourselves, would the holy Emerson, whom we have seen, be pleased, brother-like, sympathetically to welcome and triumphantly to cry Bravo! to such a consummation, to such a colophon as that?

Emerson! who only valued ideas—who knew that the world was hung on ideas—that no sensuous appearance in it but had an idea under it—an idea in the mind of God? Kant says (W. W. i. 224-5): "The structure of plants and animals exhibits contrivance to which the general and necessary laws of Nature are inadequate; it would be absurd to regard the first production of a plant or animal as a mechanical, coincidental result of the general laws of Nature." Will anyone point to a single word in all Emerson that denies this: is not to Emerson spirit all? what room does he offer for matter to crush spirit? Is not Kant at one with Aristotle when (*De Partibus*, i. 1, 5—fuller, 1, 2) he says, "For in all the works of Nature there is not chance, but design"?

"The cardinal idea of Aristotle's system," assures us the brilliant Haym, "is the idea of design. In all reality, for Aristotle, the Idea is immanent. Realising itself, it is the moving and forming soul,

and it is that as End. Nature is designful action. Her products form a series of higher and ever higher realisation of natural ends; what on a lower stage is only in beginning and possibility, reveals itself unfolded and realised on the one that follows."

As for the Centenary Edition of the works of Emerson, if so far we are not at one with it, it may be right to add now, here in the end, that, at least, we are at one with it elsewhere. The notes show excellent familiarity with its pages, with admirable memory of passages to compare in them.

II.—THE EGO

“Christian Kapp was it” (the words occur at page 72), “that could speak *only* of Napoleon *and*—Hegel! Napoleon might have been sparing of his confidence, reserved, reticent, concealed; but Napoleon could never have been more sparing of his confidence, never more reserved, reticent, concealed, than Hegel was. Just look to this”—and there is quoted a passage from page 14 of the *Phænomenologie*. And then I go on to say “that it” (the passage—and he has a thousand the like) “only exhibits the difficulties which Hegel is put to in order to find expressions that shall convey the Ego in its own natural dialectic movement, and yet conceal and secrete it into the guise of an independent, new, logical movement in philosophy.”

There occur also in the three or four preceding pages of the little book, other Hegelian quotations, or references, in which the Ego, in that its peculiar function, is undoubtedly implied. Probably the single chapter, “Hegel,” in *What is Thought?* needs no supplement; still, where *Hegel* is concerned, illustration can never prove in excess; and so it is,

even further, that I would wish to go many years back and remind, perhaps, of one of the very first things said by me of Hegel to interest, namely, what occurs in this paragraph now at page 5 of the new edition of the *Secret of Hegel*: "Even if a ray of light seems suddenly to leap to you, most probably your position is not one whit the better for it, for the gleam of the beginning proves, for the most part, but a meteor of the marsh; a meteor with express appointment, it may be even, to mislead your vanity into the pitfall of the ridiculous. You shall have advanced, let us assume, for example, to the words (*Encyk.*, page 26): 'The Idea, however, demonstrates itself as thought directly identical with itself, and this at the same time as the power to set itself over against itself, in order to be for itself, and in this Other only to be by itself.' You shall have seen into these words, let us say, so far; and you shall have smirkingly pointed them out to friends, and smiled complacently over the hopeless blankness that fell upon their features; but in the smirk, and in the smile, and in the delusion that underlies them, you shall have, like Dogberry, to be written down an ass the while. These words but abstractly state the position of Idealism—do they? And so, hugging yourself as on a secret gained, you relax pleasedly into the cloudland of the *Vorstellung*, to see there, far off across the blue, the whole huge universe iridescently collapse into the crystal of the idea. You will yet see reason to

be ashamed of your cloudland, to be disappointed with your secret, how true soever, and to find in every case that you have not yet accomplished a single step in advance."

That, then, is accurately what the *Idea* is to Hegel's own self: and is it aught else than the *Ego*? Is it possible for any words to express more precisely, more pictorially, even, the constitutive nature, action, movement, *notion*—of self-consciousness?—of self-consciousness as self-consciousness?—not less in its difference than in its identity, exact, equal, alike in both? The very definition of the *Idea*, as it is to Hegel himself, is, surely, not less than the very definition of the *Ego* to everybody else: *can* demonstration, *proof*, ever *prove* itself more absolute?

III.—CAUSALITY

The *Lector Benevolus* will please to add to the Note at page 95, as follows:—

It may be asked here in regard to the matter of Causality, if, or since, Identity explains it—that is, accounts for the relation of Necessity between the cause and its effect—what is the use of all that *Categorical Deduction* of it? Let it be observed, however, that exactly the same question might be put in regard of all the Categories. If there is difference in the two opposing characters of the concrete, there is also identity. In fact, in the whole deduction of the Categories there is at work only the single principle of Identity in Difference: Ego! The eye sees succession only—it is Reason supplies the Category.

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